

# **EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT**

**East Providence School Committee**

**East Providence City Hall 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Room 306**

**145 Taunton Avenue**

**East Providence, Rhode Island 02914**

**August 27, 2015**

## **Open Session**

**Mr. Tsonos, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.**

**Members present: Jessica Beauchaine, Nathan Cahoon, Anthony Ferreira, Joel Monteiro, Charles Tsonos. Also present: Kim Mercer, Superintendent of Schools, Robert Silva, Esq. and Andrew Thomas, Esq.**

**The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence were observed.**

**Public Comment 1<sup>st</sup> Agenda and Non Agenda Items - None**

## **Superintendent's Report**

**Superintendent Mercer requested that Interim Facilities Director, Mr. Feola, report on the condition of schools:**

**„X Silver Spring School Playground - In contact with Eric from the Engineering Department; playground equipment should arrive in the next two weeks. Eric has been assured by the contractor that all safety precautions will take place, including orange safety fence and a clean-up of the area to remove all debris. Safety fence will be erected before the start of school on Tuesday.**

**„X School Opening-All school buildings will be ready for the start of school on Tuesday. Building Inspector, Mr. Quattrucci, and Mr. Feola have started the annual beginning of school building inspection; at this point, all schools have passed inspection; will update on any problems that may arise.**

**„X Box trucks - Two more box trucks have come in, giving us a total of four out of the five ordered.**

**„X Martin Middle School - Boiler room incident at Martin, involving the back flow preventer on the domestic water line which caused 112,000 gallons (estimated by the EP Water Department) of water to spill out into the boiler room. This caused damage to our boilers, hot water tanks, sump pumps, circulator motors and pumps, sprinkler controls, and numerous electrical components and breaker boxes. This water also damaged the auditorium carpet. On August 20, initiated call to Fire Department to inform them of situation. A coordinated effort by EP Fire, EP Police, building inspector, city water department, DEM and our insurer, The Trust. All the utilities were cut to the building;**

The Trust called Clean Care, and under the supervision of DEM started to pump out the water from boiler room. On August 21, all utilities were restored to Martin with the exception of some electricity to the boiler room. Clean Care set up their drying equipment in both the boiler room and the auditorium and identified items that needed immediate replacement. The Fulton boiler representative was contacted by Clean Care to assess the damages to the boilers.

„X As of August 27 this is the update-Auditorium carpet has been removed, new carpet ordered and will be installed for the start of school. Hot water tanks- both tanks have been replaced and are operational. Sprinkler Controls- company has been in to assess sprinkler controls and have identified all sprinkler controls that need to be replaced. New parts have been ordered, estimated to be finished by mid next week. All existing controls are functioning and we have an operational sprinkler system.

„X Sump Pumps- have been repaired and are operational. Boilers-Representatives from Fulton Boiler have been to Martin twice to examine the boilers. They are currently drafting a written report due in the beginning of next week. I will provide a copy of this report to the committee as soon as I receive it. They have a 6-8 week order time; cannot let this go too long. We do not have to run all four boilers, but plan to get this completed before cold weather time.

Mr. Monteiro ;V High School fields; Athletic Director not providing list to Facilities Department of needs; he talked to Mr. Duarte about it; we

**cannot operate like that.**

**Ms. Beauchaine is nervous about how things get to that point; not sure if nets are up yet; fields need to be included with Facilities; next meeting, would like Bob or whoever to attend. At Waddington, logs chopped up by city but never removed.**

**Discussion; Mr. Ferreira is Frustrated about building issues; including parking lots.**

## **Personnel Report on Resignation/Leaves of Absence/Retirement**

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Matthew Tsonos-Dean-EPHS-Effective August 21, 2015**

**Heather Peck-Reading Specialist-MMS-Effective 2015/2016 school year**

**Jonathan Stringfellow-Phys Ed/Health Teacher-EPHS-To assume Dean position for the 2015/2016 school year**

### **RESIGNATIONS**

**Lisa Winn-School Nurse-Whiteknact-Effective August 21, 2015**

**Nicolena Corey-Supervisory Assistant-Hennessey-Effective August 26, 2015**

**Jesse Spillane-Auto Repair-CTC-Effective August 26, 2015**

## **PARENTAL LEAVE**

**Micaela Folan-ELL Teacher-Orlo-Effective 2015/2016 school year**

## **Action Items**

## **Personnel Appointments and Recalls**

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATIONS:**

## **APPOINTMENTS**

**Luke Bahry-Assistant Football Coach-EP High School-Effective 2015/2016 School Year**

**Mark Janton-Assistant Football Coach-EP High School-Effective 2015/2016 School Year**

**Sonia Price-From: Supervisory Assistant to Teacher Assistant-Francis School**

**Effective 2015/2016 School Year (one year)**

**Sharon Cabral-ELL Teacher ¡V Orlo Avenue School (one year)**

**Effective 2015/2016 school year**

**Tanika Ortiz-School Psychologist ¡V District-Effective 2015/2016 School Year**

**Tiffany Bergeron-Spec Ed/Severe Intellectual-Whiteknact (one year)**

**Effective 2015/2016 School Year**

**Kelly Ferguson-Reading Specialist-Martin Middle School (one year)-Effective 2015/2016 School Year**

**Jeanne Burdett-Reading Specialist-Martin Middle School (one year)-Effective 2015/2016 School Year**

**Jillian Sevigney-Numeracy Teacher ¡V Martin Middle School (one year)-Effective 2015/2016 School Year**

**Dena DiSano-Math Teacher ¡V EP High School (one year) Effective 2015/2016 School Year**

**Andrew Merdinyan-Math Teacher ¡VEP High School (one year) Effective 2015/2016 School Year**

**Jonathan Stringfellow-Dean of Students-EP High School (one year)-Effective 2015/2016 School Year**

**Tianara Shorts-Supervisory Assistant-Hennessey (one year) Effective 2015/2016 School Year**

**Jessica Luis-Supervisory Assistant-Hennessey-Effective 2015/2016 School Year**

**Steven Bernard-Supervisory Assistant-Kent Heights-Effective 2015/2016 School Year**

**Robin Orticerio-School Nurse-Whiteknact -Effective 2015/2016 School Year**

**Motion to approve by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Mr. Monteiro. Vote 5-0.**

**Discussion took place regarding additional positions which need to be filled; Superintendent Mercer advised this happens every year; people come and go.**

**Update on the de-consolidation of the Human Resources Department  
Mr. Monteiro sent emails; at last meeting School Committee voted to approve this for next day separation; Superintendent was to post Human Resources Director and Jr. Accountant/Benefits positions;**

following day Mr. Feola told to move personnel and files which was halted by the City Manager. His concern is little response during this process; someone made a decision not to post the two positions; as a body, the School Committee made a decision; he wanted to know who made that stop; disappointed that no communication sent to School Committee as a whole that it happened; communication poor; we should do better job; his concern more about the action of the School Committee being halted.

Regarding the Chairman's opinion about contacting the City Council to resolve the issues, we have seen how that goes; delays process; what should have happened was to force their hand; School Committee to do our job; what could we do legally; sit back waiting for someone; he thinks it is wrong; no response to his concerns; weak and negligible; he placed this on the agenda to have a discussion by this body about it.

Mr. Cahoon spent time talking to Mayor Rose about it, who shared his concerns, perspective to rush in about de-consolidation; he disagreed; follow up email next day; no response; political skill.

Mr. Monteiro V School Committee should do job, whatever it is; this body took an action a week ago, he wanted to know who decided not to post two positions.

Ms. Beauchaine V talked to City Council member; we did approve



this action; he agreed City Council not happy; checking to see if they need to approve it because of compensation; he would get legal opinion from the city; has not gotten back as of now.

City Council waited a month; cancelled meetings; told it was to be on their agenda; she spoke to Mr. Conley; agreed to check with legal; compensation to be impacted. Ms. Beauchaine had no idea what Mr. Monteiro meant by the term "hijacking." She did not think it was big issue; Mr. Feola moved the files; she was under the impression that the city had no say; Mr. Luba spoke publicly about supporting this; should have been privy to information why we were not doing this.

Mr. Monteiro " what is in our control; why contact City Council? School Committee took a vote and needs an answer about who decided not to post the positions; support of legal; no response to his email; it is an issue; "who is acting"

Kim Mercer " sent to Human Resources to post positions and directed Mr. Feola to move files; she did not know until today; she told staff not to worry about it and that she would deal with it when she returned; this was not the job of the Deputy Finance Director.

Mr. Monteiro asked the Chair about the email about moving forward as voted with approval from legal; once we all knew action halted, we should have done something.

Mr. Ferreira asked who halted the action.

**Kim Mercer was away and did not know the specifics**

**Mr. Monteiro iV made a request to the entire body; why no action taken**

**Mr. Ferreira iV post the positions now**

**Kim Mercer iV will post positions tomorrow morning**

**Mr. Monteiro iV sent out emails; no response; told a letter being drafted to go to the city; chain of communication broken; only response was to contact City Council members; we have legal grounds to post the position and let them file against us.**

**Mr. Ferreira iV when he left the meeting, asked an employee to do a job**

**Kim Mercer iV given to H/R to post; things got out of hand with city officials; she did not know what was happening here and could not have a Director dealing with an issue that was not her job to handle.**

**Mr. Ferreira iV no matter what, do it tomorrow; School Committee supports this action and it needs to be done**

**Mr. Monteiro iV needed someone here to do it as elected body; we knew the action was delayed; we waited until tonight to post positions; could have been done sooner; we are in our legal rights to do that**

**Kim Mercer iV important to get information out there**

**Mr. Monteiro iV posting for Superintendent done**

**Ms. Beauchaine iV back lash after Wednesday; phone calls; issues;**

**Superintendent away, no Assistant Superintendent; no blame for anyone if waited for the Superintendent; she agreed it should have been done; we have not received letter from Mr. Luba (Financial Oversight); someone has a problem with what we are doing, but does not know why; city has to pay salary.**

**Mr. Monteiro ¿V going forward; where does he get his information from as a School Committee member**

**Mr. Ferreira ¿V School Committee should have been notified when the postings were stopped and the action taken**

**Mr. Monteiro ¿V Mr. Tsonos knew Wednesday and should have sent out a communication in the Superintendent¿s absence; that should have happened.**

**Mr. Tsonos ¿V embarrassed for everyone; this is a people business; where was the indignation for the last three years; HR is the most important place; he will address this professionally and legally now; letter or by State Police; embarrassed for people in room who have not taken any action; people are the most important thing we have.**

**Mr. Ferreira ¿V we send people to work in buildings with problems; we need to do a better job**

**Mr. Monteiro ¿V this is a lame attempt at deflection; why did the Chairman not communicate with the rest of the School Committee.**

**Mr. Tsonos - issue was that we are putting our own employees on the firing line; Superintendent¿s job to do that and she was not present at that time.**

**Kim Mercer** - after she spoke to people here who were very upset; she said she would deal with it; she was not comfortable with putting Directors in that place.

**Mr. Monteiro** - this all revolves around communication; as structured, should be through the Chair; also, this is a public item for discussion, not for executive session discussion.

**Mr. Tsonos** - asked for legal decision because cases should not be discussed in open session;

**Andrew Thomas** - when called by a Director, he did not know about any of this; only asked could this be held in executive session and he answered yes under pending litigation.

**Mr. Silva** clarified when posted, no idea about consequence from city; Mr. Silva emailed all; he received an email from Mr. Cahoon; spoke with Attorney DeSisto; action taken by School Committee had no connection with another pending litigation matter; that was postured by someone on the City Council; DeSisto's opinion was the posting for H/R Director was so acted under Title 16 and committee conferred with Mr. Luba who concurred.

**Mr. Silva** sent an email to all; texted City Solicitor, Tim Chapman about the DeSisto opinion that School Committee action was appropriate and lawful; asked for case law from Chapman, no

response or call.

Mr. Chapman called him back; did not want to create problem between solicitors about deconsolidation; no idea what will ensue from that consideration.

Ms. Beauchaine ¡V agenda posted; if big deal, someone should be someone here if there is any problem.

Mr. Silva ¡V tell School Committee they have the right to do it; does not know what machinations will be: no checks; city injunction against School Department. Under Title 16 researched Budget Commission out of existence; no authority over the School Committee; appointed Mr. Luba as Financial Advisor who has authority to recommend and oversee financial and other matters; Mr. Luba publically agreed best thing for system.

Mr. Silva stated that his client (School Committee) has right to do this; School Committee has its own goals; not the same as the City Charter; focus should be to be as civil as we can and communicate; letter from the Chairman to the City indicating what we were doing and do you have a problem with that?

Kim Mercer ¡V already told them a month ago

Mr. Silva¡V no shame in reaching out to them

Ms. Beauchaine ¡V City Council knows we are doing this; by us

**separating, we are doing something wrong; no City Council called her; we were going to do this; this is the conversation around city**

**Mr. Ferreira ;V Mayor Rose called him; City Council upset; someone from the state got wind following morning; have to stop this because of someone from the state**

**Kim Mercer ;V had a meeting on July 22nd; they knew School Committee took vote; supposed to be on City Council agenda three times.**

**Mr. Monteiro ;V we need to take action; continue to communicate**

**Motion made by Mr. Cahoon to forego Executive Session item on the agenda, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine. Vote 5-0.**

**Motion by Mr. Cahoon to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine. Vote 5-0.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant**

**Nathan Cahoon, Clerk of the Committee**